

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L RANGOON 000537

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP/BCLTV; USPACOM FOR FPA  
COMMERCE FOR ITA JEAN KELLY

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/08/2014

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [BM](#)

SUBJECT: KNU OBSERVERS TO ATTEND NATIONAL CONVENTION

REF: A. CHAING MAI 115

[B](#). RANGOON 405

[C](#). DAO RANGOON 271015Z APR 04

Classified By: COM Carmen M. Martinez for Reasons 1.4 (B,D)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: According to a well-placed, Rangoon-based ethnic Karen leader, the Karen National Union (KNU) will send a two-person observer delegation to the National Convention (NC) in May. The postponed SPDC-KNU talks originally scheduled for late April could take place in late May, despite the resumption of the NC on May 17. Local Karen sources say 12 ethnic Karens, including three Rangoon-based Karen civic leaders and five Democratic Karen Burmese Army (DKBA) members, will attend the NC as full delegates. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (C) According to a senior Rangoon-based Karen Development Community (KDC) leader involved in setting up the January SPDC-KNU cease-fire talks, even though the talks planned for late April have been postponed (ref A), the KNU is planning to send a two member "observer" delegation to the National Convention. The contact further reported that the observer group will supposedly consist of KNU General Secretary Pad Mahn Sha, and Joint General Secretary Pado David Htaw, and will not participate in any formal NC discussions or debates. The KDC leader was optimistic that SPDC-KNU talks will resume in mid-May and will conclude with a lasting settlement.

[1](#)3. (C) Our KDC contact also informed us that the SPDC has invited him and two other Karen civic leaders from Rangoon, and one previously unknown Karen schoolteacher from Myawaddy (COMMENT: Most likely a trustworthy, pro-regime USDA member), to attend the NC as "Specially Invited Guest" delegates. In addition, the SPDC has invited five DKBA delegates to attend. Another senior Rangoon-based KDC leader, who was present at the January SPDC-KNU cease-fire talks and has strong ties with the GOB, affirmed that over 10 ethnic Karens will be attending the NC.

[1](#)4. (C) The KDC leader with strong GOB ties commented to us that the one-month postponement of SPDC-KNU talks is a good thing, as it will give the KNU commanders more time to prepare for the discussion on demarcation and troop placement. He believes that the SPDC will agree to give the KNU seven areas of control, corresponding to the present mountainous locations of the seven KNU brigades in eastern Karen State. Apparently, the SPDC will also allow a KNU office to be set up in Pa-an (Hpa-an), the capital of Karen State.

[1](#)5. (C) COMMENT: If the KNU has agreed to send observers to the Convention, the KNU then will at least be able to confer with the friendly Burma-based ethnic Karen delegates during the NC and discuss issues pertaining to pan-Karen political and cultural aspirations. The KNU observers could also confer with several other ethnic delegations concerning constitutional issues important to them all. However, in agreeing now to send observers, the KNU may have given up scant remaining leverage they could have used in the next round of talks with the SPDC. END COMMENT.  
Martinez